



Sherman James

March 6, 1948 - May 4, 2019

Sherman James 71 was born on March 6, 1948 in Millbrook, Alabama to Minerva & Jimmy James (deceased). The eldest of two children, he and younger sister Leslie Bee Singleton (deceased) grew up with the challenges of Jim Crow. Never daunted by those circumstances, Sherman focused instead on his love for the Lord and singing the gospel, which he knew was more powerful.

A born entertainer, he started singing at 7 years old in the children's choir at Goodship Missionary Baptist Church, where he elevated to soloist of both the children and adult choirs. Throughout these early years Sherman perfected his chops and by high school became known not just for his beautiful voice, but his sense of style too. Sherman loved clothes and always had the latest fashions and shoes, thanks to a part time job in a shoe store. The combination of talent, style and personality, made him one of the most popular performers in the area for dances and special events. After graduating from Sandtown High School at 18 years old, Sherman left Alabama in pursuit of a career as a professional entertainer.

With his rich baritone voice, infectious smile, and life of the party personality, he headed to Cleveland, Ohio. It took but a short time working odd jobs in between gigs to realize he was in the wrong place, the real opportunities were in Detroit, Michigan—with that thought, he relocated.

As fate would have it, it was the height of the Motown Sound and he quickly found work backing up such notables as Jackie Wilson, The Drifters, Mary Wells, Martha & the Vandellas; and the Queen of Soul herself, Aretha Franklin, just to name a few.

Life as he knew it changed overnight—he was now a professional entertainer touring the world with legends and making his first television appearances on American Bandstand and Soul Train—the dream had come true until Motown relocated to California.

Sherman packed up for the last time with visions of working with the top entertainers in the world. There was only one place left to go, Las Vegas, Nevada. It was the early 70's and Las Vegas was a mecca for great lounge acts and old school doo-wop vocal groups. Headlining at the Stardust was an incredible pianist named Copeland Davis who after hearing Sherman he hired him on the spot as a featured vocalist. It was here that lightning would strike twice and Sherman would meet Dahlene Freeman, a gorgeous young artist from Rhode Island. who he later married for over 38 years and had two beautiful daughters, Shayla & Ashleigh.

Living his dream, Sherman went on to join such legendary groups as the "Coasters," "The Platters," and "The Imperials," (the later inducted into the Rock n' Roll Hall of Fame in 2006). Additionally, he opened the Las Vegas Motown Café as featured vocalist and was often called upon to sing the national anthem before many boxing matches on the Strip, including Oscar DeLaHoya, George Foreman and Floyd Mayweather.

From early childhood, Sherman was known for his kind heart and sensitivity. Never one to say "No" he was always first in line for family, friends, coworkers and neighbors needing help, support or comfort. At 6'1 he was a gentile giant

with a huge heart. This was never truer than when his sister Leslie suddenly passed away at 44 years old, leaving 9 children ages 3-21 years old. While the children lived with his Mother, Sherman took responsibility for his 7 nieces and 2 nephews. He would send money along with the latest fashions from anywhere he travelled. The children looked forward to these gifts with excitement, and viewed him not as an Uncle, but more of a Father.

Anyone who knew Sherman knew he was a great cook! According to his close cousin Matthew, "he learned how to cook at 8 years old, because his mother would not let him go outside" out of boredom he started cooking and learning her recipes. How lucky for all of us that have tasted his culinary masterpieces of greens, cornbread dressing, yams, peach cobbler, etc..... and let's not forget those infamous cakes!

After 50 years in show business, like many of his peers, Sherman also worked a day job in the service industry; first with the Maxim & MGM Grand as a front desk clerk, then as a concierge for over 13 years at MGM Sky Lofts. More recently because of his grace and kindness with people, Sherman worked for Thomas and Jones Funeral Home.

He is survived by his wife Dahlene, daughters Shayla & Ashleigh; grandchildren Max, Haven, Emberleigh, August Jr. "AJ" and Leonardo; along with nieces Felicia, Matilda, Gail & Myra; and nephews Jimmy & Thomas.